A narrative of what happened in Bengal, in the year 1760. Wherein is contained...

Internet Archive

AC
911
1764
N37

3 9004 04033034 9

A

NARRATIVE

OF WHAT HAPPENED IN

BENGAL,

In the Year MDCCLX.

WHEREIN IS CONTAINED

An ACCOUNT of the REVOLUTION, which took Place at that Time.

LONDON:

Printed for CHARLES BATHURST, at the *Croſs-Keys*, oppoſite St. *Dunſtan's Church, Fleet-ſtreet.*

M.DCC.LXIV.

[Price One Shilling.]

THIS Pamphlet was first printed about three Years ago; and all the Copies of it were then given by the Author in Presents amongst his Acquaintance: It is now reprinted for the Satisfaction, and Use of the Public.

A

NARRATIVE

OF WHAT HAPPENED IN

BENGAL,

In the Year MDCCLX.

IN the latter end of the month of November, 1759, Colonel Caillaud arrived at Fort William, with a reinforcement of troops from Fort St. George, to ſucceed Colonel Clive and Colonel Ford in the command of the army in Bengal; both of whom, in the month of February following, quitted India to return to Europe.

The diſputes with the Dutch were intirely by this time at an end; yet the Eng-

liſh troops ſtill continued in the field; for it was thought neceſſary by Colonel Clive, now, when he could do it with ſecurity, to ſend another detachment to the northward, to aid the Nabob in oppoſing the incurſions of the Shah Zadah upon the borders of his dominions.

Early as this month the Shah Zadah, reviving his former plan, began to entertain the ſame views, which had been defeated, the preceding campaign, by the activity and enterprize of Colonel Clive. An unpardonable negligence on one ſide, and the uſual and known caprice of the people of the country, ever aſpiring after novelty, on the other, afforded both the time and means he wiſhed for, and encouraged him with no unreaſonable expectation of a happy turn in his favour.

From the time Colonel Clive left the field, no troops had been ſent by Ramnarain, the governor of Patna; nor were there any other meaſures taken by him to re-eſtabliſh the tranquillity, or to ſecure the confines of the province. The petty Rajas of the inferior diſtricts were diſregarded; and while the whole country remained unſettled, and every man was ſetting up for himſelf, theſe

people, utterly neglected and unobſerved, naturally embraced the lucky moment to aſſert an independence, and afterwards united with that power they truſted could beſt ſupport them in it. There were ſome, whom a proper aſcendancy exerted upon would have ſtill kept in awe, and preſerved faithful to their duty; but, unreſtrained by any authority, they readily cloſed with the offers which were not wanting to be made them from the oppoſite party. Others again, and theſe not a few or contemptible, ſent ſecret and repeated invitations to the Prince, and aſſurances of ſupport, whenever he ſhould exert himſelf: Theſe were a people ſtudious only of their own advantage, eager to perplex, and to profit from the misfortune of the times, and prepared to join with any ſide, that ſhould prove moſt powerful.

From ſuch errors, and ſuch diſpoſitions in the people, the party of the Shah Zadah, at the latter end of the year 1759, began inſenſibly to be reſtored, and his faction to extend; inconſiderable in the beginning, and ſo weak, that, had a body of one thouſand horſe only been properly diſpoſed, they might have then done what forty thouſand proved inſufficient for afterwards, and the

name of the Shah Zadah would have been no more heard of.

About this time was another favourable incident, which contributed more than all the reſt to augment the number of his friends, to add dignity to his name, and to aſſemble freſh followers to his ſtandard.

The preſent young and enterprizing Vizier Gauze Odin, Khan, by the murder of a former King, exalted Allum Geer, the father of the Shah Zadah, to the throne of Indoſtan: but ſome time after, being diſſatisfied with his own election in the perſon of this Prince, he impriſoned him, kept him in cloſe confinement for ſeveral years, drove his children (among the reſt Shah Zadah) from Delly; and at length, to complete the ſyſtem, he murdered him alſo, and proclaimed another Prince at that capital.

When the news of his father's aſſaſſination reached the Shah Zadah, he did not long delay to aſſert his title to the inheritance of his anceſtors. He cauſed himſelf to be acknowledged King immediately by his dependants, and was recognized as ſuch by his followers; and he demanded homage and obeiſance from the Nabob of Bengal. His right to the crown being inconteſtably a

juſt

juſt one, many principal Rajas were on that conſideration induced to unite with him, to ſupport his pretenſions to his paternal diadem. Thus, at the commencement of the year 1760, did he find himſelf at the head of an army of thirty thouſand men, with a much ſtronger and more popular claim than formerly, and burſt into the Nabob's dominions, impatient to retrieve the mortifying diſappointment of his laſt campaign.

In this manner were affairs circumſtanced, when an Engliſh detachment of four hundred men, with ſix field-pieces, and one battalion of Seapoys, commanded by Colonel Caillaud, joined to fifteen thouſand horſe and foot, and twenty-five pieces of cannon, under the eldeſt ſon of the Nabob, moved from Maidavad on the 18th of January, towards Patna. The army having gained the paſſes of Suleliagarrie, which divide the kingdom of Bengal from the province of Bahar, by the 30th, were detained there ſeven or eight days in a negotiation with the Raja of Perriah, a perſon whom there will be again occaſion to mention; who, from ſome difference between the Nabob and him, had collected forces to the amount of ſix or ſeven thouſand men, and threatened to declare for the

the Shah Zadah. Colonel Caillaud, unwilling at ſuch a juncture to leave an enemy in his rear, interpoſed to effect a reconciliation; their diſputes were for a ſhort time amicably compromiſed, and the armies again were permitted to purſue their march.

The Shah Zadah during this had penetrated as far as Patna, with deſign to attack Raja Ramnarain, the governor of that city, before he could be aſſiſted by the forces then marching from Muxadabad. Ramnarain, tho' he had been ſo inattentive to the enemy at a diſtance, and ſo unmindful of the real intereſt of his maſter, was now amply provided for his defence, and to oppoſe his farther progreſs. He had completed his forces in December, when the danger had become more immediate, to the number of forty thouſand men, with twenty pieces of cannon: he was reinforced with ſeventy Europeans, two field-pieces, and a battalion of Seapoys, under the command of Lieutenant Cockran, from the Engliſh factory; and the Shah Zadah found this army incamped under the walls of the city. Upon his approach, Ramnarain moved ſomething nearer to him, and the two camps were many days within a ſhort diſtance of each other; but nothing more

more paſſed but a few ſkirmiſhes between ſmall parties; for Colonel Caillaud had written peremptory inſtructions to Ramnarain, to protract the time by every means in his power, and upon no conſideration whatſoever to hazard a battle till his arrival. The ſame was the purport of the Nabob his maſter's poſitive orders to him; and for a little while he prudently obſerved them, and kept intrenched within ſtrong lines, purpoſely to avoid an action. But, long before their junction with him could be formed, the raſh inconſiderate man, though at that very time he had reaſon to be jealous of the fidelity of many of the commanders, yet deluded by ſome imaginary advantage, elated with his ſuperiority of forces, or dazzled by the ſplendor of an expected victory, the honour of which would devolve ſolely to himſelf; big with theſe vain expectations, he on the 9th of February drew out his army, offered battle, which was accepted, fought the Shah Zadah, and, in juſt puniſhment of his preſumption, loſt the day.

To do juſtice to his perſonal conduct, it muſt be owned, Ramnarain behaved with diſtinguiſhed gallantry, fighting hand to hand with one of Shah Zadah's principal officers; he

he was wounded in ſeveral parts of his body, and loſt two fingers of his right hand: The chief cauſe of the defeat was poſting the Engliſh troops too far from his perſon, and the deſertion of the three moſt powerful Rajas of his party; one of them fell upon the Engliſh, another fell upon the rear, and the other rode clear off in the heat of the action: By the defection of theſe, the remainder of his troops after a ſhort reſiſtance fled, and left him defended only by a few of his houſhold. Aſſailed on all ſides, the elephant he was mounted upon kneeling, and the howdah almoſt off from his back, at laſt reduced to the utmoſt extremity, he was forced to ſend to the Engliſh for ſuccour.

Lieutenant Cockran, Enſign Winclebleck, and Mr. Barwell (a young gentleman of the Engliſh factory, who went that day a volunteer to the battle) inſtantly marched to his relief with four hundred Seapoys. This little body pierced thro' every obſtacle to his aid, and, attacking with great ſpirit the party he was ſurrounded by, gave him time to recover, diſengaged him, and favoured his retreat into Patna. They ſtill puſhed their advantage with great impetuoſity for ſome time

time after his escape, again and again repulsing fresh parties which advanced towards them, and at length attempted to re-unite themselves to their own body: but, before they could accomplish this, Cockran, Winclebeck, and Barwell were killed; and, the Seapoys being left without an officer, the horse broke in among them, and cut most of them to pieces, only one surviving Serjeant and twenty-five Seapoys escaping. The rest of the English troops, when they saw the day was irrecoverably lost, made good their retreat to the city, having done so much mischief where they engaged, that the enemy would not venture to approach them, but, opening instantly to the left and right, let them pass without interruption. They left indeed one field-piece spiked up behind them, which broke down during the engagement. Thus concluded the battle of Mussempoore, in consequence of which the Shah Zadah without delay invested Patna.

This siege was but of a very short duration; for Ramnarain, though severely wounded, yet did his utmost to defend the city, and at the same time politically contrived to deceive the Shah Zadah, by a true Gentoo spirit of negotiating, sometimes soothing

him with the hopes of a ſurrender, and by various other pretences amuſed him, until Colonel Caillaud and the young Nabob, by continued and forced marches, arrived on the 19th of February within twenty-eight miles of Patna. Alarmed at this ſudden and unexpected approach, the Prince, now obliged haſtily to withdraw his army from before the town, determined without heſitation to advance towards the Nabob, and force him to an immediate battle. He ſtruck his camp the very next morning, and approached the ſame day within a very ſhort diſtance of the young Nabob's advanced poſts. The day following the relics of Lieutenant Cockran's Seapoys having joined the Engliſh troops, Colonel Caillaud adviſed attacking the enemy directly; but the aſpect of the ſtars not juſt then ſmiling on the young Nabob, who forgot not, on ſo critical an occaſion, to divine their influence by his aſtrologers, the attack was deferred till the 22d, when they promiſed to be more propitious. Accordingly on the 22d, early in the morning, the army marched towards the enemy; but, before they arrived near their camp, the morning was ſo far ſpent by the inſufferable delays of the Nabob's

march, that Colonel Caillaud was obliged to defer his intention of bringing on a battle until the following day, that he might have time enough before him; but incamped within two or three miles of the enemy, as near as he could well approach without alarming them too much. During the time the tents were pitching, he rode towards the camp of the enemy, to obſerve their poſition, and to view the ſituation of the intervening ground. Perceiving all quiet on their ſide, he took poſſeſſion of two villages about a mile in the front of his own camp, but ſituated rather obliquely with reſpect to that of the enemy, and nearly the ſame diſtance from their centre. In each of theſe villages was poſted a company of Seapoys, and the remainder of the ſame battalion four hundred paces in their rear, to ſupport them in caſe of an alarm. By ſome flying parties of horſe, the enemy preſently diſcerned the near approach the Engliſh troops had made towards them; upon which they brought up ſome pieces of cannon in their front. To anſwer this, the battalion of Seapoys was ordered to move up, and a piquet of Europeans, with two ſix-pounders, were detached from the

camp, to maintain the villages. After this both ſides remained quiet for an hour; at the expiration of that time, notice was ſent from the villages, that the enemy was ſeen to be in motion on all ſides; and the Colonel, haſtening to an eminence on the left, found that they had ſtruck their camp, and were actually in full march. A conſiderable body of horſe, riſing ſoon after from behind a ſmall hill on the right, and making directly towards the villages, confirmed beyond a doubt their deſign to bring on an action that day. Orders were therefore given inſtantly for the Engliſh troops to march and form. On their arrival at the choſen ground, they were formed between the two above-mentioned villages, the Europeans in the centre, the Seapoys divided upon the right and left of them, the artillery in the intervals, the villages, with a company of Seapoys in each, being upon the flanks of the whole; and in this order, as the enemy ſeemed determined to attack, Colonel Caillaud reſolved to receive them.

The young Nabob, by a very eaſy and ſimple diſpoſition, before agreed on, and what the nature of the ground ſeemed to invite him to, was with his troops to have formed

formed a ſecond line, with a body of horſe to cover each flank. From this order, the firſt line of the Engliſh, with the villages, would have ſecured his front, and his wings only would have been left expoſed; ſo that the enemy muſt firſt have broke through the Engliſh, or have ſuffered a ſevere fire upon their flank in coming round to attack him. But, regardleſs of all this, he crowded his army in a confuſed multitude upon the right; nor would the moſt preſſing and repeated ſolicitations induce him to alter his diſpoſition, or to diſplay his troops in a more diſtinct order; but there they remained, a body of fifteen thouſand men, with a front of ſcarce two hundred yards, in a tumultuous ununiformed heap; and to this inflexibility had he very near ſacrificed both himſelf and people.

The enemy came on with much ſpirit, though with ſome irregularity, and in many ſeparate bodies, after the Eaſtern manner of fighting. In appearance they directed their principal effort to the left of the Engliſh, having ſtationed one large body there in the beginning, and now puſhing another to ſupport them. To give ſome check to theſe, the artillery were advanced a few paces in the front,

front, and, being directed to the left, a few diſcharges effectually broke the order of their approach on that ſide. Unable to withſtand ſo hot a fire, they divided: ſome filed off to the right of the Engliſh; but the moſt part ſtill kept inclining, under cover of ſome banks and ditches, more and more towards the left, until at laſt they got quite round; there they remained for ſome time, for an object of much more importance now converted all attention on the other ſide.

The enemy had long deſcried the young Nabob, from the number of horſe, elephants, and ſtandards, with which he was incircled. The motion to their left appeared a feint only to amuſe the Engliſh; while, led on by the moſt reſolute commanders, they bore down with the beſt and braveſt of their troops againſt the young Nabob. This being obſerved, all the artillery was ordered to be drawn up upon the right, which, together with five or ſix large cannon in the front of the Nabob, fired briſkly, as the firſt body of the enemy came on in a long and deep column; but four guns, by the roughneſs of the ground, breaking down after a few diſcharges, and the Nabob's cannon

cannon being quickly deſerted, it produced little effect. Both ſides were now cloſely engaged. The enemy were received by the Nabob with reſolution: they charged in a tumultuous manner, horſe and foot indiſcriminately mixed, and with variety of weapons, arrows, pikes, ſwords, matchlocks, &c. In about ten minutes the Nabob began to give way; the enemy preſſed on, while the Nabob only acted on the defenſive.

At this critical juncture, Colonel Caillaud ordered up a battalion of Seapoys from his right, and led them on to ſuccour the Nabob. The Seapoys marched and drew up within forty yards upon the enemy's flank; they poured in one levelled fire, then a ſecond; after which they puſhed on with their bayonets, and ſo much diſconcerted the enemy, already confuſed enough in making the attack, that they recoiled upon each other, and part immediately fled. The Nabob's horſe, recovered by this ſeaſonable relief, galloped in amongſt them at the very inſtant of their confuſion, and diſperſed the reſt: none of them ever attempted to rally, and the whole plain was as clear

in

in half an hour, as if no enemy had been near it.

Whilſt they were thus repulſed in front, the party, which at firſt had advanced on the left, marched round to the rear unobſerved in the heat of the battle, and plundered the Engliſh camp: but moſt of the things, elephants, camels, &c. were recovered again in the purſuit, which the approach of the night prevented continuing beyond two or three miles. The action laſted near four hours, and a very conſiderable number fell on each ſide; but the rout was complete. The Engliſh loſt a few Seapoys only, and they took ſeventeen pieces of cannon. Of note among the ſlain, were an uncle of the young Nabob's, and the two commanders of the Shah Zadah, who led on the attack: The young Nabob himſelf received two wounds in his face and neck with arrows.

Very little, if any advantage whatever was derived from the victory of Seerpoor (ſo was the place called where this battle was fought) further than ſtriking the enemy with a momentary fright; nor did even their apprehenſions ſubſiſt. The young Nabob eſteeming his wounds (though ſlight

ſcratches

ſcratches only) of a moſt dangerous tendency, immediately after the battle retired to Patna, would neither purſue the Shah Zadah himſelf, nor would he ſuffer part of the horſe to march with Colonel Caillaud, who inſtantly and earneſtly urged him to it, and offered, with any addition of horſe to his own ſmall body, to follow the Shah Zadah, and while his troops were ſcattered, in amazement at their late defeat, and without a head, to exterminate him from the province. Through jealouſy, anxious leſt the reputation of the Colonel ſhould increaſe, to the extenuation of his own; or unwilling to cruſh an enemy at once, whom he was certain he could always reduce with the help of his Engliſh allies; an enemy too, by whoſe exiſtence alone he retained the power he then poſſeſſed, and the large army he then commanded: or from ſuch ſiniſter motives, he abſolutely refuſed to let him have a ſingle man. Thus were thoſe precious moments loſt, from the neglect of which have ſprung all the miſchiefs which have ſince enſued. Colonel Caillaud ordered his troops to incamp between Patna and the town of Bahaar:

the Nabob remained in Patna, and buried himſelf among his women.

The ſame night of his defeat, the Shah Zadah fled to the town of Bahaar, ten miles only from the field of battle. The two following days reſtored to him the greateſt part of his diſſipated forces, whom their own terrors, more than the reality of the danger, had diſperſed. Upon recollecting his own ſpirits, encouraging thoſe of his people, and upon a review of his army, he found his affairs very far as yet from being in a deſperate condition. Not many of his forces were miſſing, there was no enemy near him, he had the ſame reſources as before, and the country was as open to him as ever. Moved by theſe conſiderations, he was reſolved immediately to undertake ſome ſudden expedition, before any ſuſpicion could be formed of his loſs being ſo ſoon repaired, or the truth of his deſigns could be explored. Among the many expedients which preſented themſelves, he fixed on one, which, at the ſame time it evinced the propriety of his judgment, and ſhewed that he did not want talents to improve a happy opportunity, had every probable appearance of ſucceſs; and was certainly the likelieſt means,

means, if not to complete his views, at leaſt to improve the nature of his circumſtances; and experience would have proved the truth of this, had the ſpirit, which firſt inſpired the thought, accompanied him in the execution of it.

The young Nabob, having afforded the enemy all the leiſure he wanted, and at laſt ſatiated with his pleaſures, thought it was now time to obſerve what the Shah Zadah had been doing. Accordingly he joined Col. Caillaud with his army on the 29th of February, and made a ſlow march or two towards Bahaar: but his ſurpriſe was great, when he heard the Prince was in the field again, and not at Bahaar, but had made two forced marches beyond him towards Bengal. Col. Caillaud had long before predicted the poſſibility of this manœuvre to him; but he remained utterly incredulous, nor uſed any precaution to prevent ſuch an attempt, and, when convinced of the truth of it, only wondered how ſuch an amazing turn had happened.

The enemy having made two forced marches with an intention to enter Bengal, (to which they had often been invited by many diſaffected Rajas, particularly Cud-

deim Houſſein Khan, the Rajah of Parneah, who had again revolted) obliged the young Nabob to make all imaginable haſte after them, and, if poſſible, to prevent their progreſs. Colonel Caillaud marched his troops directly towards the river, and embarked them on board the boats, which at that time accompanied the army, and left the young Nabob and his forces to make what expedition they could after him. The Nabob was obliged to exert himſelf on this occaſion; and luckily, on the third day, the enemy, as their rout lay by the river ſide, were by the Engliſh and the Nabob's horſe overtaken. The Shah Zadah from this inſtance perceived at once the impoſſibility of his marching into Bengal by the direct road which leads along the banks of the Ganges, becauſe the Engliſh, by means of their boats tranſporting them down the river, could at any time poſſeſs themſelves of the paſſes, which are the entrance into Bengal on that ſide, before them; by which means the young Nabob would remain in his rear, and he ſhould be ſhut up between two armies. Yet, far from being deterred by this obſtacle, he perſevered in his reſolution, and on the 8th of March, changing

changing his courſe, he directed his rout over that range of mountains, which divide the Nabob's dominions to the Southward from a country North-Eaſt of the Decan, and as yet but little known. His forces conſiſting now of light horſe only, unincumbered by artillery or heavy baggage, he eaſily gained two or three marches on the Nabob. Where-ever he went, there was a neceſſity of keeping to him as cloſe as poſſible: Colonel Caillaud therefore continued to follow him; and he led them through a country ever before deemed inacceſſible to an army, from the number of thick woods and narrow paſſes, which conſiderably retarded their progreſs, and rendered their motions extremely difficult. The paſſage of one paſs in particular detained the Shah Zadah ſo long, that the Engliſh troops arrived on the 22d of March on the incampment he had quitted but two days before, the regularity of their march having carried them through in a much ſhorter time: the interval likewiſe ſpent in this tranſaction gave time for the advices to reach Muxadabad, and enabled the old Nabob to collect an army, and, ſuſtained by two hundred Europeans detached to

his

his aſſiſtance from Fort William, to march out for the preſervation of his capital. From this time (till the Prince had entered Bengal) nothing more happened than a ſeries of intricate and toilſome marches after him, in which Colonel Caillaud had ſucceſſive difficulties to encounter, from the perplexities of the country, for the ſubſiſtance of the Nabob's and his own troops, for the conducting the artillery, (whole days being employed in cutting roads to bring it a few miles only) and laſtly for directing the rout of the army, for which guides could ſeldom be procured, the few rude inhabitants of the vallies having fled into the mountains. In the latter end of March the Shah Zadah had advanced within thirty miles Weſt of Muxadabad, on the ſide of Burdwan's province, to the diſmay and aſtoniſhment of the inhabitants, moſt of whom immediately fled. He was there joined by a party of Marattoes, who had lately broke into the country on that ſide, and with them he intended to enter the city.

But now, when the time was come that called upon the Shah Zadah for the exertion of his utmoſt fortitude, to execute the very purpoſe for which he had advanced ſo far

and endured ſo much, ſuch an opportunity too as he ought to have wiſhed for, his conſtancy forſook him. Either from irreſolution, from ſome diſſenſion among his commanders, perhaps not finding his cauſe ſo warmly eſpouſed in the province as he expected, or from whatever motive, he committed an unpardonable and capital error in heſitating to attack the old Nabob immediately, and while the two armies were divided. This delay completely ruined his deſign, at firſt ſo maſterly concerted, and till then with ſo much ſteadineſs carried on; for in the mean time Colonel Caillaud and the young Nabob, by conſtant uninterrupted marches, had time to throw themſelves between him and the city. On the 4th of April, the old Nabob and his ſon formed a junction of their two armies near Burdwan, and Colonel Caillaud detached the two hundred Europeans which accompanied the old Nabob, to Muxadabad, for the defence of that city. The whole force of the Nabob being thus united, he and the Colonel marched without delay to conſtrain the Prince to retire from Burdwan, and to oblige him, if poſſible, to leave the country intirely. They found the enemy on the

7th

7th of April incamped on the oppoſite ſide of the Damoodah, a river which runs along the town of Burdwan. It being previouſly determined to engage him, the Engliſh troops, who always formed the van-guard of the army, were preparing to ford the river under cover of their cannon; when the Shah Zadah, obſerving their diſpoſition, ſpared them the trouble of completing it, after half an hour's cannonading, by ſetting fire to his camp, and retreating with precipitation. His hopes of entering the metropolis being once defeated, he was not diſpoſed to venture a battle to attempt it a ſecond time, a riſk now become too unequal, conſidering his inferiority of numbers. He preferred therefore the moſt prudent alternative, and withdrew from the province by the ſame track, and with the ſame haſte he entered, over the mountains.

It was now the moſt natural conjecture, and the ſequel proved it ſuch, that the Shah Zadah, on his return to Bahaar, would make another attempt on the city of Patna, before the place could be ſuccoured; all the Engliſh garriſon, except ſome Seapoys left for the protection of the factory, having been

been withdrawn after the battle of Seerpoor, to ſtrengthen the detachment.

Attentive to this, Colonel Caillaud on the 16th of April formed a detachment of two hundred choſen Europeans, with two field-pieces, and one battalion of Seapoys, from a re-inforcement which had joined him from Fort William, and gave the command to Captain Knox, an experienced Officer, with inſtructions to march with all poſſible ſpeed to the ſupport of Patna.

The remainder of the Engliſh detachment, as well as the armies of the Nabob and his ſon, being exceedingly harraſſed and ſpent with the length and difficulties of their late expedition in the hotteſt ſeaſon of the year, were for the preſent ordered to Muxadabad to quarters of refreſhment.

Captain Knox purſued his rout to Patna, which he compaſſed (three hundred miles) in thirteen days; a ſurpriſing effort, conſidering the intenſe heats of the ſeaſon, and that he croſſed the Ganges twice in his march. The Shah Zadah, as he had ſome days ſtart of Captain Knox, and his troops were wholly compoſed of cavalry, had reached Patna ſome time before him, and, as was ſuſpected, laid ſiege to the city,

which, from the inconſiderable garriſon Ramnarain had to defend it, was reduced almoſt to the laſt extremity. The two nights preceding Captain Knox's arrival, the Shah Zadah had made two general aſſaults. Part of the ſmall body belonging to Mr. Laws, (who had joined him on his return) with about four hundred of his own people, had forced into the town, but were driven out again by the bravery of thoſe Seapoys and their officers, who had remained in the factory, whom Mr. Amyat the Chief had ſent to Ramnarain's aſſiſtance. The third night alſo they were preparing once more for an eſcalade on all ſides, when Captain Knox appeared with a flying party in the evening. His preſence ſo much animated the inhabitants, and diſpirited the beſiegers, that, though they perſiſted in their attack, they were without much difficulty repulſed. The remainder of Captain Knox's detachment joined him the next day, and he the following morning treated the beſiegers with a ſpirited and well conducted ſally, engaged with ſucceſs one of their principal officers, and, with the loſs of a few men only, drove them from their works intirely, to which they never afterwards returned. The Prince,

perceiving

perceiving his laſt endeavours rendered ineffectual, was once more compelled to retire with his troops from before Patna, and to retreat, in want of almoſt every neceſſary, to the banks of the river Soane, fifty miles Weſt of Patna, where he has remained ever ſince. This is the third time Patna has been thus critically preſerved within a few hours of being loſt.

While the fate of that city was depending, Cuddeim Houſſein Khan, ſpoken of above as Raja of Parneah (a province Eaſtwards of the Ganges) from an antient and irreconcileable animoſity ſubſiſting between the young Nabob and him, and from ſome recent quarrels with the father, from whom, againſt all juſtice, he had detained the revenues of Parneah for three preceding years, and, taking advantage of the perplexities of his affairs, had kept the country likewiſe in his own poſſeſſion, determined (that he might preſerve what he had thus acquired, and was unwilling to refund) to throw off all ſubjection to his maſter, and attach himſelf intirely to the faction of the Shah Zadah. For this purpoſe he was levying an additional body of troops, and procuring a conſiderable number of boats,

intending to tranſport them over the Ganges, whenever a fair opportunity ſhould offer, to join that Prince.

To obviate this was now the Nabob's more immediate view. The Engliſh troops, and the army of the young Nabob, were ordered to re-aſſemble as ſoon as poſſible; and they accordingly on the 23d of May rendevouſed at Rajamaul, (a city on the Ganges near the paſſes of Suhhagurree) and remained incamped there five or ſix days, until they were certain Cuddeim Houſſein Khan had begun his march on the Parneah ſide of the river, and waited only for an occaſion to croſs the river, and join the Shah Zadah. Colonel Caillaud and the young Nabob puſhed up on the Bengal ſide, and Captain Knox was ordered, with part of the garriſon he commanded, to paſs over the river from Patna, and endeavour to intercept Cuddein Houſſein Khan, or in any manner he could to diſtreſs and harraſs him on his march. The number of boats Cuddeim Houſſein Khan had been long collecting, being unable to proceed as faſt as his army, fell ſoon after into the hands of the Engliſh; for Colonel Caillaud, being apprized of the place where they lay, detached

tached a battalion of Seapoys, who attacked and burnt them all after a ſlight reſiſtance, together with a large quantity of powder, ſtores, and ammunition. Notwithſtanding this loſs, Cuddeim Houſſein Khan ſtill advanced, until he approached very near the place (almoſt oppoſite to Patna) where Captain Knox with his party lay. Senſible that his junction with the Prince depended in a great meaſure on his paſſing this body, becauſe he was certain that the leaſt delay would bring Colonel Caillaud, who kept boats with him, and his troops ready to croſs at a moment's warning, upon his rear; he determined to attack Captain Knox, who being a young gentleman of remarkable gallantry, and eminent for his military ſervices, and as ardent on his part to come to an action, on the 16th of June a very warm one enſued.

Captain Knox, with only two hundred Europeans, one battalion of Seapoys, five field-pieces, and about three hundred horſe, maintained himſelf for ſix hours, oppoſed to an army of twelve thouſand men, with thirty pieces of cannon: he was ſurrounded the whole time; but diſcovering the apparent ſuperiority of the enemy, who were never

never before imagined to be ſo numerous, he poſſeſſed himſelf of a very ſtrong and advantageous poſt, and, making an excellent diſpoſition of his men, he in the end compelled the enemy to leave the field, with the loſs of eight pieces of cannon, three elephants, and between three and four hundred men killed on the ſpot. The horſe had once very nigh broke in upon him, but by the bravery of his own grenadiers were beat off, and he loſt no more than fifteen or ſixteen men. By this repulſe, Cuddeim Houſſein Khan, ſtopped in his progreſs towards the Prince, was obliged now to take a contrary road, and fled Northward into the diſtrict of Butteah. Four or five days after this Colonel Caillaud and the young Nabob croſſed the Ganges, to put the finiſhing ſtroke to this affair, and to relieve Captain Knox, whoſe party was eſteemed too weak to purſue ſuch numbers. He therefore, with his detachment, was ordered to return again to the garriſon at Patna.

After a few days purſuit, the rear of Cuddeim Houſſein Khan's army appeared in ſight; for he was very ſlow in his retreat, incumbered with heavy baggage, heavy artillery,

tillery, and the accumulated treaſure of ſeveral years rapine and plunder of Parneah. On the 25th of June in the morning, when the armies came in ſight of each other, Cuddeim Houſſein Khan immediately formed his troops behind ſome villages and a grove, at the extremity of a large plain. The Engliſh drew up upon the plain, and, moving to attack the villages, an action commenced by a mutual cannonading. The enemy, by frequent motions along their line, appeared at firſt inclined to make a charge with their horſe: but when the Engliſh approached within muſket-ſhot, and had driven them from the villages and grove which they had taken poſſeſſion of, they fled, and abandoned the remainder of their cannon (twenty-two pieces) and ſome baggage; and it was at laſt diſcovered, that they only intended to amuſe the Engliſh in front, while they unloaded their treaſure from the carriages in the rear, mounted it upon camels and elephants, and conveyed it off. Theſe carriages they alſo left behind them. The young Nabob and his troops behaved in this ſkirmiſh in their uſual manner, halting above a mile in the rear, nor ever once made a motion to ſuſtain the

Engliſh. Had he but acted on this occaſion with the leaſt appearance of ſpirit, and made even a ſemblance of fighting, the affair muſt have proved deciſive; nor could Cuddeim Houſſein Khan, or his treaſure, have eſcaped. When the enemy were flying in his ſight, he was even afraid to hazard a party in the purſuit, though a very few horſe would have been ſufficient to have diſperſed them. The Engliſh, without any horſe, fatigued with an eight hours march, and having been under arms the whole day, were incapable to attempt it. The Nabob's inactivity, to give it no worſe a name, and the approach of the night, favoured their eſcape. However, after a little reſt from the toils of the day, Colonel Caillaud perſiſted in the reſolution to follow the enemy as long as the ſeaſon would permit him, (the rains having already begun to ſet in with exceſſive violence) and, if poſſible, by another blow effectually to complete their ruin. The rout of their flight next day was ſpread for miles together with tents, carriages, and variety of baggage, which, in their hurry to get off, they could not carry with them, and were obliged to leave behind. Colonel Caillaud

continued

continued his purſuit four days longer, the army of the young Nabob following him; and the enemy would moſt probably in a few days more have been overtaken, or have been obliged to abandon their treaſure, had not a very ſingular and uncommon accident, as favourable to the enemy as unfortunate to the Nabob, prevented his proceeding any further, and diſappointed every other purpoſe.

The young Nabob, as he was lying aſleep in his tent at midnight, was ſtruck dead, in the midſt of a violent ſtorm, by a flaſh of lightning. This accident happened on the 2d of July; but, though ſingular in itſelf, yet no very extraordinary circumſtances attended it. The fire pierced thro' the top of his tent, ſtruck upon his left breaſt, and he periſhed in the flame, with one or two attendants who ſat by him. Colonel Caillaud had the moſt timely information of this event, and was fortunate enough, from his early intelligence, to prevent the immediate ſucceſſion of bad events, which was apprehended from the irregular and ungovernable nature of the Nabob's troops. He inſtantly ſummoned all the chief commanders of the Nabob's army to

his camp, aſſembled them, and, by employing the influence of thoſe more particularly attached to the intereſt of the Engliſh, all dangerous exigencies were at length provided againſt; the inferior officers were gained over, by promiſes, to remain quiet; the minds of the people were calmed, and their fears appeaſed. But he was now obliged to abandon all thoughts of any further military operations on this ſide. He was fully employed, and it was as much as he could accompliſh, to keep the Nabob's army together, who agreeable to their cuſtom, after the death of their leader, threatened immediate diſſolution. However, it was at laſt agreed, that the ſole power over the army ſhould be veſted in Colonel Caillaud, 'till the ſentiments of the old Nabob were known; and the brother of Ramnarain was nominally joined with him in the command. Had the army diſbanded once, the whole province of Bahaar muſt inevitably have been loſt, and poſſeſſed by the Shah Zadah.

To preſerve them in the ſame temper he had brought them to, and to prevent any further accidents from the levity and unſteadineſs of an unconſtant multitude, Colonel

Colonel Caillaud hurried the army back to Patna, halting only a few days at the town of Button, to oblige the Raja of that place to pay ſome arrears of revenues due to the Nabob, which the troubles had prevented collecting before. Another reaſon of this haſte aroſe from the ſeverity of the weather, by this time become ſo bad by conſtant rains, and the waters riſing to ſo great a height over the country, that in a few days more (whatever had been his ſucceſs) he would have been compelled to return; for, ſince his paſſing the Ganges, the heavy rains had rendered the tents of the ſoldiers intirely uſeleſs, and the miſerable huts of the villages were their only ſhelter. He therefore conducted both armies back to Patna, and terminated the campaign on the 29th of July, by diſtributing them into winter-quarters.

The troops had ſcarcely been ſettled a month in quarters at Patna, when the change which happened in the government of Fort William by the removal of Mr. Holwell, and the ſucceſſion of Mr. Vanſittart to the preſidency, but more particularly the declining condition of the Nabob's affairs after the death of his ſon, called for the preſence of

Colonel Caillaud in Bengal. The Colonel had already preſented a plan to the Nabob, and the council of Fort William, for the re-eſtabliſhment of the Nabob's affairs, for the appointing a ſucceſſor to the vacant command of his armies, for the diſcharging the long-neglected arrears to his troops, for their better maintenance in future, and for the more regular and conſtant payment of the Engliſh troops.

This propoſal was calculated for the times, and to be effected with little trouble or diſturbance; for the infirm ſtate of the government, rent by inteſtine diviſions, and the unaccountable management of the Nabob, rendered ſtill more intolerable by the incapacity and corruption of his miniſters, joined to the precarious tenure by which his own power ſubſiſted (the will and inclinations only of this diſtreſſed, injured, and complaining people) would admit of no violent meaſures, without proceeding to dangerous extremities, and ſcarce any more at preſent than a temporary alleviation; but the Colonel's propoſals meeting with ſome obſtacles from the Nabob, and much more oppoſition from the then governor and council, he was at laſt compelled to leave the army,

army, and go down to Fort William, to ſollicit that ſome ſpeedy remedies might be applied to evils ſo alarming, and that he might be enabled, if poſſible, to take the field again the next ſeaſon early.

When Colonel Caillaud arrived at Muxadabad, he viſited the Nabob, and at his requeſt imparted to him the opinion he had conceived of his preſent circumſtances. He deſcribed to him without reſerve his unhappy ſituation both at home and abroad, the pernicious conſequences which ſuch a ſeries of bad conduct as had for ſome time paſt prevailed, if perſevered in, muſt produce; and he then took occaſion to point out to him the means by which he imagined his affairs might be beſt and ſooneſt reſtored to their neceſſary order, and power to himſelf and content to his ſubjects procured. The Nabob, after liſtening with much attention, appeared fully ſatisfied with the candour, and pleaſed with the freedom, of the Colonel's declarations; and after having aſſured him he ſhould conſider his advice, he diſmiſſed him with many profeſſions of kindneſs and eſteem; and the Colonel after this, having no further buſineſs at Muxadabad, purſued his journey to Fort William.

The

The new governor and council of that place had been long impatient for his arrival, to obtain from him a perfect knowledge of their own and the Nabob's affairs to the Northward, and of the country government in general; a ſubject they had been long conſidering, as they were very ſollicitous that ſome effectual method ſhould be immediately reſolved on, to extricate themſelves from the ruin in which the Nabob, by his neglect and weakneſs, ſeemed to be very near involving both himſelf and them.

Mr. Vanſittart on his acceſſion to the government, from this one circumſtance alone, had many difficulties to contend againſt. He found that the Nabob, ſince the departure of Colonel Clive, had continued to entertain ſuſpicions highly injurious to the Engliſh, to whom it was evident he was now only attached by his fears, conſcious that without their aid he could not any longer ſupport his life or kingdom. Among the many cauſes of diſcontent, the following were not the leaſt, or the leaſt complained of.

As the Nabob advanced in years, his tyranny increaſed, and he became inſupportable

portable to his ſubjects; among whom the nobleſſe were diſſatisfied to the laſt degree, inceſſantly engaged in cabal and faction, and reſtrained only by dread of the Engliſh power from depoſing and cutting him off.

The clamours of his ſoldiers at the capital for their pay were perpetual, and reached even to the palace, which they frequently ſurrounded, and ſcaled the walls, to the imminent hazard of his life. The pay of his own forces in the field was in long arrear, and the Engliſh troops were obliged to remain unſatisfied.

No appearance either of policy or œconomy were any longer preſerved, or even pretended. By neglect of the former, every inſignificant Raja, who rented the government lands, detained the revenues, or paid them only as he ſaw there was a force to compel him to it, and the more powerful ones were in actual rebellion: by inattention to the latter, what little money came into the treaſury, was no longer employed to uſeful purpoſes, but ſquandred away in licentious luxury.

The unlimited oppreſſions, the exorbitant exactions of his miniſters, whoſe principles were as baſe as the dirt he raiſed them from,

from, and their inhumanity, extending even to the wanton and unjuſt deprivation of life, produced an univerſal odium. Add to this, that people of all degrees hourly exclaimed againſt the calamities they endured, by the want of proviſions; the unheeded diſtractions of the country having cauſed a ſcarcity unknown in the worſt of former times, and by which the poor ſuffered inconceiveable miſeries.

There was no part of the original treaty with the Engliſh, which the Nabob on different occaſions had not infringed; and they could no longer pretend to defend his government, or fight his battles, while he neither confided in their councils, nor contributed reciprocally to the ſupport of them.

By maintaining a conſtant ſtanding force they had exhauſted themſelves; by which means they could neither make any inveſtment of a cargo to ſend to Europe, nor, what was an object of much greater importance, could they, while ſuch a ſyſtem prevailed, give the leaſt aſſiſtance to the army before Pondicherry, who were then diſtreſſed for money to carry on the ſiege, and who intirely depended upon ſupplies from Bengal. For an exigence ſo

preſſing as this, it was evidently neceſſary that ſome ſalutary meaſures ſhould be thought of; and it was obvious too, that the Engliſh ſhould not permit to eſcape ſuch an occaſion of endeavouring to ſecure ſomething for themſelves, as well for preſent ſupplies, as a ſecurity againſt future accidents of the like nature. Conformable to theſe principles, a ſhort time after Colonel Caillaud's arrival, a plan was deviſed, conſidered, and approved of by the Governor, the Colonel, and the whole Council, who deſired the preſence of the Nabob's ſon-in-law Coſſen Aly Khan at Fort William, to conſult with them on this preſſing occaſion. The old Nabob conſented to this requeſt, and ſent him. On his arrival the ſentiments and reſolutions of the Governor and Council were made known to him immediately; and he was ſo well convinced, after a few conferences, of the equity and ſincerity of their intentions, and ſo much approved the prudence of their councils, that he at once agreed to aſſiſt them in the execution of them. After a ſhort ſtay at Fort William, he returned again to his father, to prepare him to receive the determination he himſelf had agreed to.

Soon after his departure, Mr. Vanſittart the Governor, and Colonel Caillaud, followed him to Muxadabad, taking with them an eſcort of two hundred Europeans, and one battalion of Seapoys, both for their own protection, and likewiſe, if occaſion required, to inforce that reformation, which they were ſenſible, both for the ſervice and ſafety of the Nabob and the company, and for the public utility, it was indiſpenſably requiſite to eſtabliſh. The Nabob had a meeting with the Governor and the Colonel, to adviſe with them for the ſupport of himſelf and government, whoſe ſtrength languiſhed daily, and whoſe decay was not only prejudicial to itſelf, but, as their intereſt had been ſo long and intimately connected, was alſo imparted to the affairs of the company.

The Governor, after a friendly introduction, delivered to the Nabob three papers, wherein were diſplayed, with equal propriety and clearneſs, the misfortunes his kingdom laboured under; the precarious dependance on which he himſelf held his authority, every hour inſulted, and in danger ſhortly of being deſpiſed and trampled on, through the male-adminiſtration of miniſters,

ſters, whom he had advanced to this degree of truſt and power from being his menial ſervants. In them were repreſented the importunate cries of his injured ſubjects, oppreſſed by theſe miniſters, by famine, by the confuſions of the country, and by war, which had over-run the kingdom, to the utter ruin of the province of Bahaar, and which might, but from his own imprudence, have been terminated long before, but which ſtill continued, and was likely to continue to rage with more violence than ever.

The means by which theſe errors might be retrieved, were compriſed in a few articles.

The abſolute removal of his preſent miniſters was the firſt point inforced; and as the Nabob confeſſed himſelf, through the infirmities of age and grief, incapable of diſengaging himſelf from the perplexities which every-where embarraſſed him, it was recommended to him to fix the adminiſtration of the government in the hands of Coſſen Aly Khan, his ſon-in-law, whom he had long before expreſſed an intention of raiſing to the honours and dignities of his late ſon; that the forces ſhould be paid

their arrears; that the people ſhould be eaſed of their oppreſſions; finally, that certain lands in the diſtricts neareſt to Fort William ſhould be aſſigned over to the company, to reimburſe them the charges of paying their armies, their artillery, and other military expences, and to enable them alſo to reſtore in ſome degree their declining commerce.

The Nabob heard, and promiſed attentively to reflect, and to give an early anſwer to theſe articles: but no ſooner had he parted from the Governor, than, inſtead of expreſſing the leaſt regard to them, he inſtantly entered again into cloſe conſultation with his old counſellors how to elude them, and diſcloſed every thing which had paſſed between the Governor and himſelf. The reſult of this was, that they inſpired him with ſuch a hatred and jealouſy of his ſon-in-law, becauſe recommended to him by the Engliſh, that Coſſen Aly Khan could not any longer think himſelf ſecure from his reſentment, nor ever afterwards ventured to approach his preſence. The Nabob alſo declared, that, could he this time by any means deceive them, he would truſt the Engliſh no more, and would take

care

care to be ſufficiently guarded againſt them for the future. In fine, he abſolutely refuſed to conſent that the leaſt alteration ſhould be made. There was no other way now remaining to bring the Nabob to any reaſonable terms, than by endeavouring to act upon his fears; a meaſure which his ſon-in-law readily eſpouſed. No better or more convenient time could offer, than what the next night preſented, being the concluſion of the Gentoo feaſt, when every conſiderable perſon of that ſect would be fatigued with the tedious performances of their religious ceremonies.

Colonel Caillaud therefore, as ſoon as the night approached, marched his troops into the city; where, as had been concerted, he joined Coſſen Aly Khan with his forces, and, when the dawn appeared, they ſurrounded the Nabob's palace; while at the ſame time detachments were ſent to ſecure the perſons of his three miniſters. The Governor, ſollicitous that no blood ſhould be ſpilled on this occaſion, had ſent a letter to the Nabob by the Colonel's hands, to be delivered at a proper ſeaſon, in which he laboured to perſuade him to acquieſce in thoſe demands, which neceſſity required

ſhould

ſhould be complied with. When the Colonel had drawn up a party of his troops within the court of the palace, he ſent in the letter. Upon peruſal of it, upon the knowledge that his miniſters were ſeized, and upon perceiving his palace was beſet by Engliſh troops, the Nabob burſt into the moſt violent fit of rage, denounced vengeance again on the Engliſh, threatened he would make all the reſiſtance in his power, and that he would never yield the terms demanded, but with his life. However, this ſtart of paſſion, availing nothing, ſoon ſubſided. After an hour's intent meditation, when his mind was become calm, he deſired the Colonel might attend him. The Colonel did ſo, and was detained a long time by the Nabob, which he employed in urging to him how vain all reſiſtance muſt be, and that in the end he would be compelled to yield; and he was at laſt convinced that his perſiſting was to little purpoſe. Yet, after all, he remained inflexible in refuſing the offers made to him; and inſtead of aſſenting, as was hoped and expected, he, in a tranſport of anger and deſpondency, threw up every thing in deſpair, and declared he would from that inſtant relinquiſh

the

the government intirely, conditioning only that ſecurity ſhould be given for the preſervation of his life. He added, he would have no longer concern in the government, after an attempt like this; and that he too well knew the diſpoſition of mankind, and of his countrymen, to think of truſting himſelf near Coſſen Aly Khan, from whom he was convinced his life muſt be in perpetual danger. To this reſolution he firmly adhered; and though the Governor came to him, and gave him the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that not only his life was ſafe, but his government too, of which he muſt be truly ſenſible it was never intended to deprive him, yet he remained fixed in his determination, and only requeſted that he might be immediately ſent down to Fort William, where he wiſhed to reſide under the Engliſh protection (for he had loſt all other) in privacy and repoſe. The Nabob thus renouncing the government, to which no perſuaſions could recall him, Coſſen Aly Khan, his ſon-in-law, aſſumed the title and authority of his father; and as his firſt act of power, for the ſervices the Engliſh had performed, he granted them all the advantages ſtipulated for the company. Every

perſon

perſon of conſideration in the city came to pay their reſpects to the new Nabob a few hours after his acceſſion. The people of all claſſes appeared extremely pleaſed with this revolution, and the whole city was the ſame day as compoſed and quiet, as if nothing uncommon had happened; nor was there perhaps ever ſo conſiderable an alteration of ſo great and extenſive a government brought about with leſs diſturbance, or with more ſatisfaction to a people in general.

The next day the old Nabob, agreeably to his own deſire, was ſent from the city to Fort William, attended by a ſtrong eſcort of Europeans to protect his perſon from the inſults of the people; and he was permitted to take with him all his private effects, his women, jewels, treaſure, and whatever elſe he thought proper; and he now reſides at Fort William, ſupported by a very conſiderable income from his ſon.

The happy effects of this event have already been experienced. Many of the ſuperfluous forces are reduced, by which means the Nabob is able to pay the neceſſary remainder; many oppreſſions have been lightened, many grievances reclaimed, and many injuries redreſſed.

But, among all these publick benefits, the emoluments derived to the company are great and important. The departments of Burdwan, Midnapoore, and Chittagonge, a tract of country reaching from the entrance of the Ganges on either side the river almost to Muxadabad, bounded by Daca and Arraccan to the East, and extending two degrees beyond the Ganges to the West, is now the English territory in Bengal; a region, the annual produce of whose revenues amounts to six hundred thousand pounds. The Nabob and company have entered into the most strict and mutual engagements of alliance, offensive and defensive, which have the best appearance of remaining firm, from the interest each of them have to observe them. By this the company is secure, the Nabob's government established, and in a fair way of becoming great and flourishing.

FINIS.